

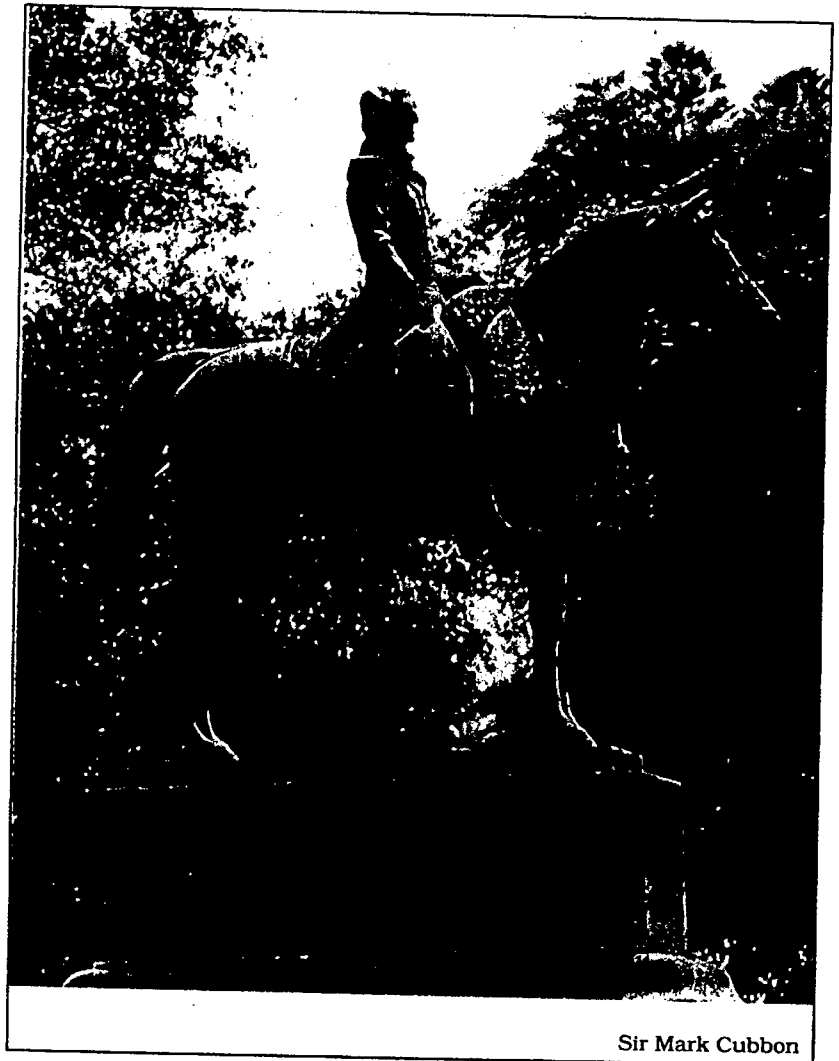
# STORY OF BANGALORE CANTT.

Basavaraj N. Akki

*The origins of cantonment in Bangalore and controversy regarding the administrative authority between the Mysore and Central Governments makes for very interesting reading*

**A**fter the defeat and death of Tipu Sultan in the last Mysore war in 1799 some British troops garrisoned in Srirangapattana. But the climate of Srirangapattana was found unhealthy to the troops. This forced the Madras Government to seek for a healthier station. They pitched upon some lands near the City of Bangalore for the purpose and approached his highness Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar III for permission to occupy them. This was readily granted and a vacant site near the village of Ulsoor which forms part of the then assigned tract was given to them for the accommodation of British troops. It was occupied in 1807 by two British regiments and barracks and other military buildings were soon erected on it.

But before this because of unhealthy climatic condition of Srirangapattana there was a proposal to destroy the fortifications and remove the garrison to



Sir Mark Cubbon

Bangalore. Maj. Gen. Wellesly was strongly opposed to these measures and wrote a memorandum in which he reviewed the military

situation of the peninsular part of India, and strongly opposed both the removal of the garrison from Srirangapattana as well as

the destruction of the fortifications. Notwithstanding this powerful plea to leave things as they were, there was strong opposition to the continuance of the British Troops and they were finally removed to Bangalore in 1809. This is the origin of the cantonment in Bangalore.

### **Administration of the Tract**

The administration of the area was not affected by the presence of the British troops. Both the military lands (i.e. Cantonment) and the Civil Station remained under the authority of the State. The Police arrangements in the cantonment were the same as the Police arrangements of a standing camp. That is to say, the Commanding Officer had the power of punishing all persons belonging to the troops but he had no authority over the civil population. This power was in the hands of the "Native" *Fouzdar* of Bangalore Division and the *Amildar* of Bangalore Taluk who resided in the city. Matters continued in this state for some time. In 1811, however, the Madras Government asked the Resident to request the Maharaja to transfer this entire Police Authority or Civil and Criminal jurisdiction as it was understood in those days, of the *Bazaars* and the Cantonment to their Commissariat Department.

The Resident wrote back to say that the Maharaja was unwilling to make any change in the Police management. But the Madras Government were still desirous of securing the Police jurisdiction and they once again addressed the Resident, requesting him to obtain the Maharaja's consent to some arrangement by which the Police Establishment should remain under the authority of a Commissariat Officer. The Resident was also requested by them to explain to the Highness the nature of the arrangement. As a compromise the Maharaja agreed to appoint a Commissariat Officer under his own Authority as the Superintendent of Police, Bangalore with a salary of 100 Pagodas. The first Superintendent so appointed was Captain Cubbon who later became the Commissioner of Mysore. The Maharaja's Niroop (order) which was in the nature of a general order applicable to Captain Cubbon and his successors in office ran as follows :

*By his highness Krishna Raja Wodeyar for the Fort and Cantonment of Bangalore for the guidance of Captain and his successors.*

*(1) As it would occasion delay in the enquiry and punishment of offences and in the administration of justice, to transmit daily accounts to the Presence and to wait for instructions from Mysore, Captain Cubbon is hereby authorised to*

*examine and settle disputes, quarrels and to punish offences according to their nature and agreeably to his own judgement.*

*Captain Cubbon being placed at the head of the Police Cutcherry at Bangalore, will enquire into and punish all trifling offences committed within the Fort or Cantonment as above specified. But all great offences viz., robberies of sums above (500) five hundred pagodas and murders and suits about sums of the same amount among persons who may be without service or employment of any kind or among merchants or any sellers of goods, all such offences to be stated to the Fouzdar who will report the same to the Presence (the Maharaja) for further instructions.*

Should the troops be removed from Bangalore, the Police Cutcherry to be considered unnecessary.

### **State Jurisdiction**

The Commissariat Officer so appointed was ex-officio the Master of Police over all persons belonging to the troops and in all cases regarding them he was under control of the Commanding Officer. His power over the non-military classes as Superintendent of Police was derived from the Maharaja and in Civil and Criminal cases regarding them he was subject to the authority of the Mysore Government. He was empowered by the Maharaja's Niroop to punish all trivial offences and settle civil suits in which the sum in dispute did not exceed five hundred

pagodas. All civil and criminal cases beyond his jurisdiction were to be referred by him to the Mysore Authorities to whom also appeals lay against his decisions. This arrangement was quite different from the ones which existed at the time in British Cantonments in other States. The Nizam for instance had transferred the entire civil and criminal jurisdiction over the cantonment of Secunderabad to the Madras Government and the people there were amenable to the laws of that Government. But in the Cantonment and Civil Station of Bangalore all persons not belonging to the military were treated as subjects or denizens of the Mysore State. They paid their taxes to the Mysore Government and their disputes civil and criminal were adjudicated upon by Tribunals set up by that Government. This arrangement remained in force till the area was made over to the British Government in 1881.

#### **Claim by Madras Govt.**

By 1830 the area had gathered some importance and when the Headquarters of the Mysore Government was established in it in 1831, it acquired an additional importance and began to grow in extent and

population. The Government of Madras then wanted to bring its administration more into line with that which obtained in Secunderabad and other British protected areas. When the authority of the Maharaja was vested in a Commissioner in 1831 they attempted to take the area under their own control and began to dispose of the lands without any reference to the conditions agreed upon in 1814. But the Government of India soon put an end to it with the observation that the rights of the Maharaja had not been alienated and the fact that a Commissioner was in charge of Mysore did not confer any rights on the Madras Government to act in contravention of the terms of the agreement. Strict in conformity with the conditions was enjoyed and all grants of lands made in the area were ordered to be reported to the Maharaja, as before.

#### **Centres Decision**

This set the matter at rest for the time being. It was revived once again in 1858 in a more intensified form. The Madras Government now set up the plea that the Maharaja had transferred all his rights over the area to themselves and that the area had been considered purely as a Military Station from the time

when the British troops were first stationed there in 1807. This elicited a vigorous protest from Sir Mark Cubbon on behalf of the Government of Mysore. He maintained that the terms of the Agreement of 1814 and the wordings of the Maharaja's *Niroop* appointing the Superintendent of Police conclusively negated the claim of the Madras Government. Matters came to a head and both the Governments appealed to the Government of India. The Supreme Government upheld the contention of Sir Mark Cubbon and observed that Bangalore is not like a British Government but a station in a foreign territory where houses are lawfully held under a peculiar tenure from the Rajah's Government.

The claim of the Madras Government was thus turned down finally and the controversy came to an end. The area continued as before to be administered by the Mysore Government. On the 25th of March, 1881, his highness Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyar Bahadur was invested with ruling powers. Ten days later the British Government obtained the entire Tract from his highness for purposes of a British Government.